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ABSTRACT

The National School-to-Work Office in collaboration with the National Association for Gifted Children, the Council for Exceptional Children, the Association for the Gifted, and the Council of State Directors of Programs for the Gifted have identified 11 gifted education/school-to-work (GT/STW) models that are either best practices or unique approaches. This report provides an overview of one of the unique approaches models: the Tonasket School District's Career Connections in Washington state. This small, rural, and remote school district has access to cutting-edge technology on a new K-12 campus where teachers identify talented students and provide them with self-guided learning opportunities. The world of work is simulated through job searching and training, performance evaluation by mentors, and creating and presenting a career portfolio to a community review panel. Guest employment panels and training sessions provide connecting school-based and work-based activities for students, and help students, parents, teachers, and others understand employment trends and practices as well as all aspects of an industry. Partners such as Microsoft, Tree Top, and the U.S. Forest Service provide mentorships, field trips, and internships. The report includes a program overview, a description of the CHOICES program that allows students to participate in a creative business, and assessment tools. (CR)

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ED 447 631

Gifted Education/School-to-Work Models: Best Practices and Unique Approaches: Tonasket, Washington, School District.

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EC 308120

Gifted Education/School-to-Work Models: Best Practices and Unique Approaches

The National School-to-Work Office has been collaborating with the National Association for Gifted Children, The Council for Exceptional Children, The Association for the Gifted, and the Council of State Directors of Programs for the Gifted on a national effort to identify exemplary Gifted Education/School-to-Work (STW) models. Our purpose has been to forge new relationships between the STW and gifted education communities around common and critical goals: teaching rigorous and relevant academic skills, identifying and developing talent, and guiding career development. We believe sharing these practices will expand learning opportunities for all learners by building an even richer and more inclusive STW system, and by "raising the bar" on learning and teaching for all students.

We use the term "gifted and talented," which is broader than "academically talented" (used in the School-to-Work Opportunities Act), because state definitions of giftedness mostly use some variation of the current federal definition, which is (1988 Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act):

> *Children and youth who give evidence of high performance capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop such capabilities.*

Last year, letters were sent to state-level STW and gifted education directors and association leaders to help identify gifted education models that also exemplify STW. Submissions were also requested on all gifted education Listservs. We received 23 competitive submissions.

A technical review process was used to ensure that all submissions were thoroughly and impartially evaluated. An outside review panel was assembled which comprised experts in gifted education and STW. Their experience included state gifted education and STW leadership, local STW program evaluation, and post-secondary gifted education research. All submissions were evaluated according to criteria consistent with guidelines made available to all applicants.

Five **Best Practices** and six **Unique Approaches** were selected by the panel. The designation "Best Gifted Education/STW Practice" signifies excellent progress in implementing a comprehensive STW system that challenges high achieving/gifted and talented students. The designation "Unique Gifted Education/STW Approach" recognizes a unique program element. Unique Approaches did not present all key components of a comprehensive STW system (school-based, work-based, and connecting activities), or provide sufficient information about how gifted and talented students are served.

Programs evaluated as very strong:

- specifically serve gifted and talented students;

• demonstrate a school-based learning component that supports and builds on a work-based learning component, and provide students with high level academic and technical skills and opportunities for career exploration and guidance;

• demonstrate a work-based learning component connected to academic classroom learning, and prepare students for the diverse skills needed in today's high-performance workplaces;

• present connecting activities that build and maintain linkages between students, educators, the workplace, parents, and others in the community;

• provide evidence about effectiveness, including indicators that it could be replicated in diverse settings throughout the country; and

• address identified priorities such as strategies to: improve math and science achievement, serve gifted students in rural and urban areas, enhance middle school achievement, and promote linkages with institutions of higher learning.

A brief description of one of the **Unique Approaches** follows:

TONASKET SCHOOL DISTRICT'S CAREER CONNECTIONS (WASHINGTON): *Unique Approach: Addressing the needs of academically talented rural students.* This small, rural and remote school district has access to cutting-edge technology on a new K-12 campus where teachers identify talented students and provide them with self-guided learning opportunities. The world of work is simulated through job search and training, performance evaluation by mentors, and creating and presenting a career portfolio to a community review panel. Guest employment panels and training sessions provide connecting school-based and work-based activities for students, and help students, parents, teachers, and others understand employment trends and practices as well as "all aspects of an industry." Partners such as Microsoft, Tree Top, and the U. S. Forest Service provide mentorships, field trips, and teacher and student internships.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Achieving by Believing

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Dear Lorraine,

Due to the close time frame for the submission of the Gifted Education/School-to-Work program, I am submitting an abbreviated overview of our program. I hope this can adequately describe the innovative and far-reaching program we currently have in place and our plans for further enhancement.

I would be pleased to visit with you in greater depth or provide additional materials if needed.

Thank you for your interest and support in serving the needs of the gifted and talented students. This truly is an area that is deserving of a dialogue and a sharing of successful programs and practices.

Sincerely,

Rhonda Buoy Colbert

Rhonda Buoy Colbert

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How are students identified for you program?

Teachers identified students within their regular classroom. The targeted students not only excel, but showed interest, ability, and motivation to do more or additional learning. The teachers provided opportunities for theses students to go beyond the regular curriculum. They provided self guided learning, based on the students' interests and strengths. The program is integrated with their academic course of study.

What do parents think about your program?

Parents view the program very successful. Students are encouraged to develop special interests to point of expertise. They would not have such opportunities for exploration or learning without theses programs.

How involved are they?

Many parents support our effort through serving on advisory committee, mentors, community experts and/or supervising special events, as well as serving a "advocates" for programs.

Any parents names you can share with me who support what you are doing?

Call Susan Mensik 509/486-2151 (W) or 509/233-4924

Montie Smith 509/486-2161 ext. 1222

Cathie Dinkins 509/486-2161 ext. 1504

Any data you have collected to demonstrate that what you are doing has raised academic achievement levels?

Data is limited. "The Best Light Possible" portfolio would highlight the academic awards. Each student is placed in the program by their skills and maturity, this enhanced program will result increased recognition. One area measurable will be the increased placement of students in post secondary opportunities and special awards.

What have been your struggles/barriers you have had to overcome?

The greatest barrier is administrative understanding of the value of School-To-Work for all students, including Gifted and Talented. Administration seems more concerned about the

meeting district's requirements for graduation then preparing for students' future. Although, work-based opportunities may appear to be fewer in a rural community, the commitment to our students from community/career mentors is outstanding.

Rural strategies and Lessons learned...

Integration of academics with relevant learning (connecting school-based and work-based learning) is the key to success in a small rural school. Small rural school do not have an "expert" to teach the connecting activities and work-based education. Plus with high unemployment in our area, the program must be sensitive about displacing employees.

Integrated practicums (the extension of the regular classroom curriculum to the application to another area) are able to accommodate more students with work experiences, satisfy local graduation requirement and meet the essential academic learning requirements of our state.

Tonasket has discovered guest panels and training sessions an efficient method of connecting school-based and work-based activities for all students. They provide opportunities for students, staff, and partners to understand all aspect of an industry. The interaction between the involved participates produces better community and school relations.

Parental support is critical to the success of our programs, we appreciate their involvement at all grade levels. In a small rural remote area, school is the center of the community. With community support we are able to extend the program beyond the school site. This is a rewarding experience for the students and the community mentors. An example is Jim Price, Tonasket Police Department has spent 100's of hours with Nattalie Mensik and will be willing to do the same of others.

Changes in administration and career guidance can be deadly for personalizing a student's career path. Personalizing a student's career path is essential by not easily accomplished. Educational support within the school system is just as important as parental support. It takes all the key players working together, supporting each other, to have a successful

School-To-Work program in a small rural school.

How do you think we increase the linkage between the gifted and education and STW communities?

·Continued dialogue between parent, student, teacher, and administration is imperative.
·Public relations focusing on the successes of the gifted and talented student, not just the athletic program.
·Helping students realize it is OK to "excel" not apologize or minimize their special gift.

What do you see as the most critical factor(s) for people that might want to replicate your program?

Our program is in no way prefect.
We are just beginning to see the results of allowing Gifted and Talented students to take different paths. There is no mold. We must be flexible, allow for programs to develop, constantly adjust as needed and keep abreast of technology. Take small steps and move slowly toward you vision.

Tonasket School District

Gifted and Talented/STW Programs

Tonasket School District
Gifted and Talented/School-to-Work Programs

The Tonasket School-to-Work system, Career Connections, serves ALL K - 12 students. The academically talented students are also effectively served by:

- •providing opportunities for self guided learning based on student's interest, passions, strengths that are integrated with their academic course of study.
- •providing opportunities for cooperative learning groups of multi-age, based on strengths and interests.
- •connecting students with expert mentors who can provide "real world" internships in demanding workplaces.
- •providing school-based work experiences that allow the students to further develop their talents and abilities and assume adult responsibilities to solve "real-world problems".
- •encouraging the students to "serve as a mentor" for other students and adult thus sharing their talents, developing leadership skills, promoting self confidence, and providing a much needed service to our school and community.
- •facilitating the development of a well documented career portfolio that demonstrates the development of special interests to the point of expertise.
- •arranging for the presentation and review of their portfolio by a Community Review Panel.
- •submitting their accomplishments for local, state and national scholarships, competitions, and recognition as appropriate.

One of our goals is to prepare ALL students for the workplace with essential reading, writing, and cooperative skills acquisition (National Goal #3). Technology aids us in meeting this goal.

As a small, rural, remote district we are innovative in developing unique opportunities for our students to develop their talents to the point of expertise. We are fortunate to have access to "cutting edge technology", be networked district wide and enjoy a beautiful new campus that includes Elementary, Middle School and High School. Therefore, our ability to create effective multi age, multi discipline cooperative learning groups is enhanced. Middle school and high school students therefore assume mentorship and leadership responsibilities for younger students.

The collaborative effort of Title VI, Carl Perkins, Basic Education, Gifted and Talented, Learn & Serve, Department of Labor, Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board and Vocational Education dollars provides STW opportunities for ALL students.

These collaborative efforts have allowed for powerful partnerships with such well known companies and agencies as:

•Microsoft
•Tree Top Inc.
•Apple Computer
•Prolepsis Technology & Training
•US Forest Service
•WA State Apple Commission

The partnerships provide opportunities for career mentorships, field trips, teacher and student internships, use of "cutting edge technology", technical and financial support. In addition, we have tremendous support from our local businesses, service organizations and community professionals. These provide opportunities for job shadows and internships.

We have successfully established linkages with Wenatchee Valley College, Central Washington University, Eastern Washington University, North Central Educational Service District (NCESD), and Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) through our various competitive grants.

We have Articulation Agreements with Wenatchee Valley College in Medical Careers and Business and Office Education. We are currently developing articulation agreements for Child Care Services, Food Services and Tree Fruit/Horticulture. These agreements will continue to expand our Tech. Prep. opportunities.

Tonasket School District has been identified by our North Central ESD, as a video teleconferencing site by Fall 1998 and we anxiously await the opportunities this will provide our students.

Through an active advisory board, strong parental involvement at all levels, effective partnerships, and the "spirit of collaboration" amongst program areas, we have created relevancy and connectedness for our school-based learning, work-based learning, and our career guidance program.

The selection/participation process for Career Connections includes the following steps thus allowing us to simulate a more "real world" work place experience.

•Reviewing of available placements (Job Descriptions)
•Application and resume to coordinator
•Screening of application by a review panel
•Interviewing of candidate
•Participating in orientation
•Participating in trainings, field trips and special events.
•Completion of performance self-evaluation
•Documenting hours worked and competencies/skills gained through their placement/job.
•Performance evaluation by mentors
•Creating a career portfolio to document experiences
•Presentation of career portfolio to a community review panel

Career counseling and guidance is an integrated part of the middle school curriculum. Our portfolio program, mentorships, and community review panels encourages on going career and academic planning at the secondary level. An advisor-advisee program will be reinstated in the middle school and high school in the Fall of 1998, to facilitate the development of career paths based on students interests and abilities. This effort will be enhanced by an introductory career and technology based class for all ninth graders.

An "all aspects of the industry" project will be added to our portfolio requirements. In addition, performance self-evaluations will become an integral part of our work-based experiences and be included in the portfolios.

Students involved in the Career Connections program are assessed in a variety of ways. They include:

- "mock job interview"
- reflective essays identifying the skills and competencies gained through their placement
- career portfolio documenting skill development to point of expertise
- career portfolio presentation to a Community Review Panel and response to questions from panelists
- performance self-evaluations completed by student
- performance evaluations completed by career mentor/supervisor

Our greatest assessment continues to be students successfully transitioning from high school to post secondary training and the "world of work".

We invite you to look through the accompanying binder and enjoy samples of our gifted and talented STW programs. These represent only a few of our programs.

For more information, feel free to contact Rhonda Colbert at 509-486-2161 or 509-476-3503 (home).

Rhonda Colbert

CHOICES

CHOICES is a integrated program that allows students to participate in a creative business. Emphasis is given to business advertising, the interview process from both interviewer and interviewee perspectives, manufacturing, marketing, employee relations, decision making and cooperative skills. In addition, service projects are an integral part of the CHOICES program. The program in an integrated School-to-Work model for middle school students. It is in full implementation at the Tonasket Middle School for all sixth grade students. The program is currently being expanded to include an integrated seventh grade component. The enthusiasm for this program continues to grow and we are now seeing great interest in developing fully integrated models for other grade levels.

Due to the success of the CHOICES program, we have established opportunities for our academically talented students to spend a full day with business managers, executives, and board members of major companies and businesses to gain a greater understanding of all aspects of the industry. Tree Top, Inc., North Valley Hospital, Noel Plate Company, and Regal Fruit Co. have partnered with our district to create the student and teacher internships. These experiences will further enhance the operation of our own PAWS Nature Paper Company as the students see "real world" applications and solutions.

Again through the use of technology, our students have developed a Hyperstudio project that clearly illustrates the process of the paper making business. These students, challenged and motivated, are developing their skills to the point of expertise at an early age. Many in this particular middle school class have identified career areas of interests and are actively pursuing opportunities to gain exposure and experience in their career field of interest.

Paper Making Business

CHOICES is a teaching unit that allows students the opportunity to participate in a creative business. Emphasis is given to business advertising, the interview process from both interviewer and interviewee perspectives, manufacturing, marketing, employee/employer relations, decision making and cooperative skills. In addition, service projects are an integral part of the **CHOICES** program. The program is an integrated School to Work model for middle school students. It is in full implementation at the Tonasket Middle School for all sixth grade students.

I. Facilities
   A. Permanence
   B. Electricity, Water, Furniture

II. Integration Components
   A. Language Arts
      1. Advertising
      2. Marketing
      3. Sales
      4. Resume
      5. Job Application
      6. W-4 Forms
      7. Lease Agreement
   B. Communication
      1. Cooperative Groups
      2. Addresses a wide range of audiences for different purposes
      3. Uses effective language and style
      4. Analyze how communication is used in career settings
      5. Provides feedback for employees
   C. Mathematics
      1. Profit and Loss Statement
      2. Loan Application, Interest Rates, Payments
      3. Spreadsheet (Expenses)
      4. Database (Items Sold)
   D. Science
      1. Scientific Method
      2. Metric measuring system
      3. Life Science
   E. Social Studies
      1. Artistic designs of different countries and civilizations
   F. Arts
      1. Design and Create: Ad Posters, Cards, Bookmarks, and Stationary using Multimedia
      2. Design business logo
      3. Lettering

4. Stamping techniques

G. Health & Fitness
   1. Safety issues and concerns in business settings
H. Careers
   1. Business Marketing & Management
   2. Committee meetings
   3. Interviews
   4. Trouble shooting
   5. Money/Profit management
   6. Recognition of community, school and student supporters
I. Leadership
   1. Challenge by Choice
   2. Helping Hands Program

III. Service Learning Component
   A. Sixth Grade Camp
      1. Clear Trails
      2. Plant Seedlings
      3. Trail Signs
   B. Recycling
      1. Paper
      2. Cans for camp scholarships
   C. Senior Center and Nursing Home
      1. Distribute cards
      2. Donate cards, stationary and bookmarks
      3. Make holiday items
   D. Elementary School
      1. Cross-age teaching
      2. Help with elementary curriculum (i.e. business & habitat site tours, Helping Hands program and classroom & pod fairs)

IV. Portfolio
   A. To be developed

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Vision Statement

To design a program with a real world connection that would:

- be integrated throughout our curriculumand community.
- meet Washington's essential learning benchmarks.
- give students opportunities to participate in all levels of a business that they could take ownership in.
- include a service componenet.

THE INTERVIEW PROCESS
(from the employer's perspective)

Grade Level: Middle School
Unit Content Areas: Careers, Communication, Reading and Writing

Essential Academic Learning Requirements:

*Communication
- *The student uses listening and observation skills to gain understanding.
- *The student communicates ideas clearly and effectively.
- *The student uses communication strategies and skills to work effectively with others.
- *The student analyzes and evaluates the effectiveness of formal and informal communication.

*Reading
- *The student understands the meaning of what is read.
- *The student reads different materials for a variety of purposes.

*Writing
- *The student analyzes and evaluates the effectiveness of written work.

Suggested Learning Activities:

The teacher will:
* lead the listening and learning activity (discuss SOFTEN model).
* lead discussion on what constitutes a good job application and resume.
* lead a discussion of what an employer will look for in an employee.
* assist in the brainstorming of interview questions.
* discuss the evaluating procedure for the interviews. (see form)
* schedule interview times with the other staff members and students.
* tally up the interview evaluations to determine the top scoring students (those who will be hired).

The students will:
* participate in the listening and learning activity.
* sort through the resumes and job applications based upon the criteria from the group brainstorm.
* communicate why an application was accepted or rejected based upon the criteria.

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The student will (continued):

* brainstorm different questions to ask prospective employees.
* choose a selected number of questions to be asked at the interviews.
* interview and evaluate other students.

Assessment:

* student participation in listening and learning activity
* Are You a Good Listener worksheet
* student participation in interview process

Resources and Materials:

* listening and learning materials
* Are You a Good Listener worksheet
* large paper for listing brainstorm ideas and questions
* interview evaluation forms
* guest speakers from personnel offices (optional)

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Sample of Assessment Tools

for

Career Connections

CAREER CONNECTION COMPETENCIES

AS BASED ON THE VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL SECONDARY CORE STANDARDS AND MEASURES

LEARNING COMPETENCY GAINS

STANDARD ONE:	**Students will demonstrate basic skills competencies.**
Measure 1)	Ability to read, write, and complete basic computations, and the ability to understand and communicate in writing orally.
Measure 2)	Ability to work well with others, which includes human relations skills and multicultural sensitivities.
Measure 3)	Ability to perform critical thinking, which includes problem solving, decision making, and ability to organize and prioritize.
STANDARD TWO:	**Students will demonstrate work maturity skill competencies.**
Measure 1)	Possession of appropriate work ethic, appearance, and attitude toward work performance.
Measure 2)	Ability to lead and to follow appropriately.
Measure 3)	Ability to adapt skills and attitudes to change and lifelong learning.
Measure 4)	Ability to manage personal and family life.
Measure 5)	Ability to identify and set education and employment goals.
Measure 6)	Possession of job search skills and knowledge of how to access job identification.
STANDARD THREE:	**Students will demonstrate entry-level occupational skills competencies.**
Measure 1)	Knowledge of all aspects of the industry being prepared to enter, transition to work within the field, safety precautions, and expectations of world of work.
Measure 2)	Comprehension of technology.
Measure 3)	Skill mastery of specific occupational training.
STANDARD FOUR:	
Measure 1)	Achievement of education objectives.
Measure 2)	Satisfaction of student, instructor, and employer on all four standards in this document.
Measure 3)	Employment and/or enrollment in next level of education.

Rating Scale:

5=Consistently Exceeds Expectations. 4= Exceeds Expectations. 3= Meets Expectations. 2= Needs Improvement. 0 = Non Applicable

Career Connections Performance Evaluation

Student Name _____ Evaluation Month_____

Name of Business _____

Please list any job the student performed that is in addition to those previously listed: _____

_____

Total hours worked/month_____ Wage/hr_____ Days absent:_____ Days late_____

MARK APPROPRIATE BOX

1. Knowledge of job: Consider extent of student's knowledge of present job. Does student know what to do and why? Is student on the alert to increase his or her knowledge?	Has thorough knowledge of work	Has good knowledge of work	Requires considerable coaching	Has inadequate knowledge of work
2. Quality of work: Consider ability of student to produce work that meets high standards of quality. Consider accuracy and neatness of work regardless of volume. How frequently and serious are errors?	Highest quality	Well done	Passable	Poor
3. Quantity of work: Consider volume of student's work produced under normal conditions. Does student produce the volume required on each task? Does student meet the quantity standard set for the job?	Large volume	Good volume	Slightly below average volume	Unsatisfactory volume
4. Attendance and punctuality: Consider frequency of student's absences as well as lateness.	Record is excellent	Occasionally absent or late	Frequently absent or late	Undependable, absent, or late without notice
5. Attitude: Consider attitude of student towards work, company, and associates. Consider also willingness of student to work with and for others. Does student work well with others? Does student observe company policies? Is student willing to do the less desirable tasks?	Excellent attitude	Good attitude	Passable	Poor attitude
6. Safety: Consider student's effort to perform work safely. Does student use equipment properly and follow basic standards of safety?	Excellent safety behavior	Good safety behavior	Fair safety behavior	Poor safety behavior
7. Judgment: Consider ability of student to make decisions and to utilize working time to best advantage. Does student plan logically to get work done in best possible manner? Are all facts obtained before making decisions? Does student know when to seek advice? In unusual situation, does student act wisely?	Works independently	Needs little supervision	Needs frequent supervision	Cannot be relied upon; needs constant supervision

8. Reliability: Consider ability of student to get work out and to complete a job under pressure. Can student be depended upon to complete assignments satisfactorily and on schedule? Is student willing to work especially hard to meet peak loads?	Can always be counted upon	Generally can be counted upon	Unpredict-able under pressure	Unable to learn
9. Flexibility—adaptability: Consider the speed with which student learns and the amount of instruction needed. Adapts easily to new conditions? Is student willing to try new ideas?	Learns fast	Learns reasonably fast	Slow to learn	Unable to learn
10. Personal characteristics: Consider honesty and integrity of student. Is student capable of properly representing the company over the telephone or directly with the public?	Excellent	Good	Passable	Generally unsatisfactory
11. Personal appearance: Does student dress suitably for the job? Is general impression one of neatness and cleanliness? Does student keep work area orderly?	Excellent	Good	Passable	Generally unsatisfactory

A. Have you discussed the student's progress with him or her? Yes_____No_____

3. To what extent are you satisfied with the student's performance?
Exceeding expectations_____ Meeting expectations_____ Below expectations_____

C. To improve skills, suggest areas or objectives for student to work on this month:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____ _____

Employer Date

_____ _____

Student Date

_____ _____

Vocational Instructor Date

_____ _____

Coordinator Date

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Career Connection Portfolio Development

Career Connection Portfolio *is specific to your activities in the Career Mentor Program. It will be the basis for your presentation to a Community Review Panel. The Career Connection Portfolio must include the following:*

- ***Resume with (Skills Summary)***

- ***Job shadow activities*** *(minimum of four)*
  - *Letter of introduction*
  - *Thank you letter for each*
  - *Signed document from career mentor--This should appear on your weekly time log*
  - *Reflective Essay for each job shadow*
    "What specific skills did you learn rather than a listing of activities in which you participated".

- ***Extended Job Shadows*** *(minimum of two of which are four days in duration)*
  - *Letter of introduction*
  - *Thank you letter for each*
  - *Signed document from career mentor--This should appear on your weekly time log*
  - *Reflective Essay for each job shadow*
    "What specific skills did you learn rather than a listing of activities in which you participated".

- ***Interviews of career mentors*** *(minimum of four)*
  - *Career mentor interview questions*
  - *Career mentor interviews--as selected*
  - *Signed form from career mentor interview*
  - *Thank you note to career mentor*

- ***Letter of recommendation*** *-- self created*

- ***Research paper*** *on a career of choice--may utilize support materials from such sources as Occupational Outlook Handbook, ACTIDiscover(a computer program available in each classroom).*

Choices™ (a computer program available in the HS Counseling Office, Career Without College Series, Career Discovery Encyclopedia Set, Plan For Tomorrow Today, Internet, as well as a wealth of materials available through our HS Library and Career Center. Interviews of career mentors are encouraged.

- **Performance Evaluations**
  - Self-evaluations
  - Performance evaluation by career mentors and staff

- **List of Service to school and community**
  - Community Service Profile
  - Reflective essay

    "What have you learned from your service experiences and how have others benefited."

Portfolio/Presentation

An oral presentation of self and your career interests:

What are your interests, abilities and special accomplishments?

A summary of your career portfolio findings:

What have you learned about your career interests and abilities as they relate to your career plans? What are your long term career goals (2, 5, and 10 years)? What is it that you will need to do to accomplish these identified goals? What have your school and community contributed to your personal success?

Response to questions by community panel

Use your creativity in presenting yourself and your career research. Consider a display board or a special way to highlight the contents of your portfolio.

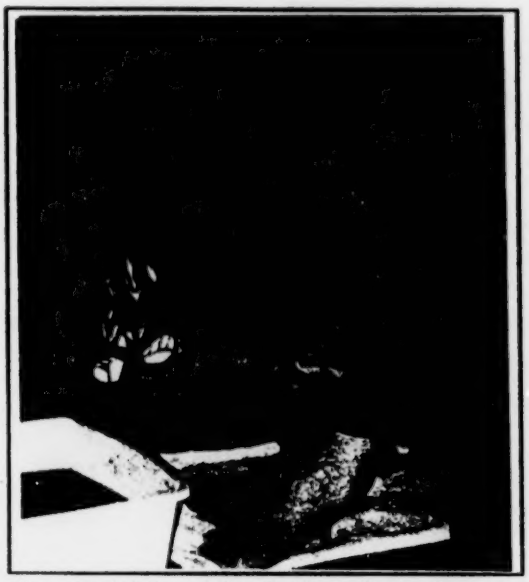
Paper making gives students choices for future

Education is good business at Tonasket Middle School.

In C.H.O.I.C.E.S. — Creating Hands-on Opportunities in Integrating Career Experiences and Skills — sixth-graders learn math, science, career skills, communications, language arts, technology and a good dose of self-confidence through a successful paper making business.

Giving Hallmark a run for its money, the students have more orders for Paws Nature Paper than they can keep up with. But that doesn't stop them from giving some away. They make bookmarks for the local library and cards for nursing home residents.

Developed by Dawn Millard, Beth Eschler, and Valerie Kauffman, who have always had a bent toward project-oriented, integrated learning, the business started last spring when Learn and Serve and School-to-Work dollars bought the start-up equipment and allowed the three teachers to write lesson plans tied to essential learnings.



Kassy Call, left, and Meg Smith produce a sheet of handcrafted paper from recycled materials.

In an area with a high poverty rate and low educational profile, they hope C.H.O.I.C.E.S. will give students the skills to expand the choices they'll have as adults. "Being on time, doing a quality job, all those pre-work skills" are learned, Millard said.

The program emphasizes business advertising, the interview process from both interviewer and interviewee perspectives, manufacturing, marketing, employee/employer relations, decision making and cooperative skills. Service projects are integral to C.H.O.I.C.E.S.

Through job applications, resumes, and interviewing, the 90 sixth-graders select board members, managers, safety/quality inspectors, and production line employees. The business is integrated into all classes.

In language arts students compile resumes, fill out job applications and W-4 forms. They discuss advertising and marketing techniques and create their own ads. In addition, they decorate bookmarks, cards, buttons gift tags and stationery including creative slogans.

In career classes students sort the applications, write interview questions and select the student management teams. They also form committees to do the groundwork for promotion, e-mail, building liaisons, community connections, and much more.

The majority of the production happens in science classes. Starting with recycled paper collected from all three Tonasket schools, students tear, blend, dip and dry to come up with the finished paper product. They also use the metric measuring system and the scientific method, researching, designing and implementing experiments to test the effects of angiosperms and gymnosperm seeds in paper making.

Math classes use a spreadsheet and database to keep track of all the items sold, income and expenses for the company. They also weigh and graph how much paper is collected at various grade levels.

Students learn technology by videotaping different events, using the Zap Shot camera, scanners, computer draw programs and graphics, and multimedia presentations with HyperStudio.

"In addition to classroom experiences, students have grown in their communication skills, group processing, and leadership qualities," Millard said. These qualities are reinforced when students test their skills on the Low Ropes Course. Sixth-grade teachers are learning to become qualified low-ropes instructors.

Parent support has increased since C.H.O.I.C.E.S. began. Parents help their children with resumes, applications and practicing for interviews, and they are among the best customers. Ameri-Corps members also work with kids.

The sixth-graders experience service-learning four ways. First, outdoor camp reinforces their connection with an understanding of the environment. Second, they focus on recycling paper and aluminum cans. Third, they connect with the community with their nursing home and library donations. Finally, students are involved in cross-age teaching with elementary students, increasing their awareness of recycling and giving tours of the business and Habitat, a 1/2-acre outdoor site sixth-graders develop in an elective class.

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MULTI-MEDIA MENTORS

Another STW opportunity for gifted and talented middle school and high school students resulted through a competitive technology grant, "Project Lift", awarded to the Tonasket School District during the summer of 1996. "Project Lift" provided training, "expert" mentoring and "hands-on" experience with cutting edge technology for students in our advanced technology program, Prime Time Technology. Through this program students created and directed a multi-media production for more than 200 staff, parents, and business partners representing three school districts. They also had the opportunity to experience virtual reality with 3D glasses from Prolepsis Technology & Training.

Through an integrated effort of sixth grade Language Arts, Science and Technology, a multi-media mentorship program was born. Language arts teacher, Kim Kristensen, identified academically talented students to assume the responsibility and challenge of self-directed learning and mastery of the Hyperstudio program. Through cooperative learning groups, the multi-media mentors directed and created a successful Hyperstudio project "Apple" which was highlighted at a Tri-District Technology Inservice in May of 1997 and is showcased at the Washington State Apple Commission Visitors Information Center in Wenatchee, WA.

During semester one of 1997, Mack Hauff and Josh Olmstead, with identified interests and abilities in technology, had the opportunity to work daily with a graphics/technology expert in designing posters and programs with Adobe Photoshop. Very special athletic programs for our school and community were a result of this collaborative effort of Learn & Serve/STW/Title I programs. An extension of this effort occurred this semester when one of the high school students became the "expert mentor" for two gifted middle school students, Bobby Colbert and Meg Smith.

The middle school students, with the assistance of the high school mentor, self guided learning, and assigned work experiences developed numerous multi-media projects for our school and community. They in turn serve as mentors for others.

This program will be further enhanced by offering a Summer Technology Camp for middle school students identified as having special interests and abilities in technology. Upon completion of the Technology Camp, the multi-media mentors will provide mentoring/training to other students and adults in our school and community thus extending their expertise.

SOUND AND LIGHTING TECHNICIAN

Mike Oberg, a graduating senior, with many developing to the point of expertise, has participated in the Career Mentor Program this past year. His focus and career ambition is to obtain a position as an audio engineering technician.

The Tonasket School district with its state of the art technology has provided Mike will the opportunity to think critically and creatively as he faced "real world" issues surrounding his work experience as the Sound and Lighting Technician for the Tonasket School District. He is developing a manual to assist the students that will assume these responsibilities upon his graduation from Tonasket High School in June. I have included samples of his work.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Through the Career Mentor Program, Nattalie Mensik has had the opportunity to work directly with the Tonasket Police Department for the past four years to pursue her interest in Criminal Justice. Her career objective, determined her freshman year, is to work for the Federal Bureau of Investigation. This program has provided her the opportunity to develop skills and competencies that a small rural high school couldn't possibly provide through their regular curriculum. She has volunteered more than 6,000 hours of volunteer patrol work and has had the opportunity to view and experience all aspects of the industry. Through this partnership, Nattalie has completed the following trainings and certifications

- •Okanogan County Reserve Academy, 1997
- •Bomb Information Class, 1996
- •DUI Detection Update Class, 1995 & 1997
- •Kiwanis Youth Law Enforcement Career Camp, 1995
- •Pepper Spray Class, 1995
- •Asp Class 1995, Assistant Training 1996
- •Certificate of Training for Uniform, 1997
- •Crime report (UCR) , 1995
- •Tint Machine Certification, 1996

These opportunities have Nattalie successfully on the road to her career goals.

VIDEO PRODUCTION AND EDITING

Media student, Mike Tomren, through self guided instruction, mentoring relationships, school-based work experience and work experience, has became a video production and editing expert. Mike's expertise will now be utilized to train middle school students during a special summer session funded collaboratively through Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, Northwest Rural Learn & Serve, Carl Perkins, and School-to-Work grant dollars. The middle school students will then serve as mentors/trainers to other students interested in video production and editing. The students will also assist teachers in the classroom during the 1998/1999 school year.

CHOICES

CHOICES is a integrated program that allows students to participate in a creative business. Emphasis is given to business advertising, the interview process from both interviewer and interviewee perspectives, manufacturing, marketing, employee relations, decision making and cooperative skills. In addition, service projects are an integral part of the CHOICES program. The program in an integrated School-to-Work model for middle school students. It is in full implementation at the Tonasket Middle School for all sixth grade students. The program is currently being expanded to include an integrated seventh grade component. The enthusiasm for this program continues to grow and we are now seeing great interest in developing fully integrated models for other grade levels.

Due to the success of the CHOICES program, we have established opportunities for our academically talented students to spend a full day with business managers, executives, and board members of major companies and businesses to gain a greater understanding of all aspects of the industry. Tree Top, Inc., North Valley Hospital, Noel Plate Company, and Regal Fruit Co. have partnered with our district to create the student and teacher internships. These experiences will further enhance the operation of our own PAWS Nature Paper Company as the students see "real world" applications and solutions.

Again through the use of technology, our students have developed a Hyperstudio project that clearly illustrates the process of the paper making business. These students, challenged and motivated, are developing their skills to the point of expertise at an early age. Many in this particular middle school class have identified career areas of interests and are actively pursuing opportunities to gain exposure and experience in their career field of interest.

Integration of academics with "real-world" problem solving is a standard within our Career Connections program. An example of the fully integrated Sixth grade curriculum with Paws Nature Paper is submitted with the CHOICES materials. This integrated curriculum has now extended to the seventh grade and is providing more exciting opportunities for the academically talented.

Employment panels and training sessions for the Career Connections programs provides opportunities for students, staff, parents, and partners to better understand "all aspects of the industry", employment trends and practices, skill standards, and the connection of school-based and work-based experiences.

Teachers and staff are supported through in-servicing opportunities, participation in state and national conferences, and purchasing of needed resources and materials. We have effectively utilized integrated team planning by providing release time or stipend time for curriculum development. This allows for multi-discipline and multi-age level curriculum development. Again, through collaborative efforts we can financially support these efforts.

Parent involvement is strong throughout our district. In a small, rural, remote area, the school is the "center" of the community. We have actively fostered relationships with parents by providing opportunities for their involvement. Parents serve as:

- members on school committee
- classroom volunteers
- mentors
- community experts
- advocates for their students as well as other Tonasket students.

Parental support is most critical to the success of our programs. We appreciate their involvement at all grade levels.

To accommodate the needs of students and best serve their academic and career needs, we have established block scheduling at the middle school and high school. Although this year we operated a three period day with periods of 100 minutes, the blocks will be altered for the next year. To allow for more class offerings, we will have two blocks of 50 minutes and three blocks that are 90 minutes in length.

We also provide advanced classes at a "zero" hour so academically talented students can participate in additional classes. We provide these classes through Distance Learning Systems.

Through an integrated practicum, we are able to provide greater number of work experiences, satisfy local graduation requirements, and meet the essential academic learning requirements of our state.

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